

and European democracies are some of our most important. It is important we work together, try to understand each other, and communicate—not only on a political but on a personal level—through our citizens.

For nearly 40 years, a cultural and political exchange has occurred between the United States and Germany through young members of society. In fact, my office is currently participating.

Maja Sondermann is a 21-year-old from a town close to Frankfurt, Germany, a young professional and student studying marketing and advertisement and currently interning for my office. She is a participant in the 39th year of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, CBYX, a program jointly funded by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag, and one of five CBYX participants currently interning on the Hill.

Initiated in 1983, the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange offers young Americans and Germans the opportunity to explore each other's culture. This cultural exchange program involves participants moving to the U.S. or Germany for 1 year and strengthens the ties of our American-German relationship through citizen diplomacy.

Over 26,000 American and German high school students, vocational students, and young professionals have thus far participated in and benefited from this incredible experience.

Even through the pandemic the participants remained resilient and joined the cultural exchange virtually. This year, the CBYX was able to return to an in-person exchange in August of 2021. For the duration of the program, the participants live with host families, immersing themselves in the daily life of a different culture, and attend classes, and the young professionals even work in the foreign country. They form bonds and friendships with people whom they meet during the year abroad and learn about a different culture while fully immersing in it and building strong personal and professional connections.

The participants on both sides gain a new perspective on global affairs, politics, and socioeconomic topics, as well as a new sense of empowerment, independence, and knowledge of a different culture and what it means to be a global citizen.

Their contribution to cultural exchange and the American-German friendship doesn't end with their flight back home. These young minds are positively impacted through this experience, as they share it with others after returning to their home countries.

Even beyond that, the participants stay connected with the people they meet and other participants. Many alumni of the program continue to contribute to transatlantic relations on both sides through the alumni network and their personal career paths.

With the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Ex-

change in 2023, and as a member of the German-American Caucus, I want to draw attention to this important program. It continues to support both our nations' transatlantic bonds while also inspiring so many young minds to engage in a cultural and political exchange.

Madam Speaker, the CBYX program is an exceptional chance for our countries to connect and communicate on a different level and form relationships that will last and positively impact our future since the program directly impacts the foundation of our future young citizens.

OUR NATION'S FENTANYL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Speaker, there is a fentanyl crisis in our country. It is plaguing our communities. It is plaguing my district, poisoning our children, and devastating American families.

Madam Speaker, it seems to be ignored by many, however, both in the White House and on this House floor. Our southern border is an unmitigated disaster due to this administration's open border policies. Drugs, crime, and the secret transportation of illegal immigrants flooding into our communities without warning in the middle of the night is causing serious, long-term damage. Yet, it seems to be ignored by too many.

Fentanyl is an extremely deadly substance. It has flowed into our country in droves by way of the southern border. A recent study found that fentanyl deaths have doubled in 30 States amid the border crisis. Americans are suffering at the hands of the drug cartels.

Customs and Border Patrol reported a 134 percent increase in fentanyl seizures in fiscal year 2021 with a disturbing 11,201 pounds confiscated, which is estimated to be able to kill every American seven times over. This is devastating and unbelievable.

With this high amount confiscated, the Drug Enforcement Agency was forced to put out a Public Safety Alert, warning the American people about fake pills laced with fentanyl and other fentanyl-related poisons putting so many at risk.

Drug overdoses have hit a record high in 2021 at over 100,000 deaths in the United States including more than 5,000 deaths in Pennsylvania. Nearly two-thirds of these deaths were connected to fentanyl.

□ 1100

In 2021, the leading cause of deaths for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45 were drug overdoses. Is there any question that Congress should act? Madam Speaker, I am a cosponsor of the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation will permanently schedule fentanyl substances as a schedule I drug, giving law enforcement the abil-

ity to prosecute the trafficking of deadly fentanyl into American communities.

My Democrat colleagues recently blocked this lifesaving legislation when my Republican colleagues offered it for consideration last week. It truly is hard to understand why President Biden and far too many of our Democrat colleagues, in fact, all last week, have ignored this crisis, blocked legislation that would help fight it, and have sat idly by as they contemplate what the root causes of our southern border crisis might be.

Madam Speaker, if someone can show me where we have seen the White House actually mention fentanyl as the terrible scourge on our country, I would like to see it. If, however, they were to take a mirror to their own policies, they might realize that the root cause is the policies themselves. It is certainly time for Congress to act, to step up and do its job together to stop the flow of fentanyl into our communities.

BIDEN POLICIES HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Madam Speaker, I wanted to shine some light on a topic that many Wisconsinites and Americans may not really be tracking very closely. After over a year under President Biden and his administration, it is clear that the policies are having an adverse effect on small business. It is raising the price of goods, which people can see right now when they go to market, when they purchase gas, and it is slowing the economy.

While my colleagues across the aisle have been really, I think, unable to enact an agenda that would combat this, the Biden administration's unaccountable and unelected bureaucrats are trying their hardest to expand and enact these reckless policies. That is what I wanted to touch on today.

President Biden's executive orders, of which he signed many right after being sworn in as President, have had an adverse effect on competition. They consolidate sweeping government power over things like agriculture, which is near and dear to my own State of Wisconsin; the airlines; the banking industry; broadband; health and healthcare products; meat packers, which we are all well aware of; and the technology industry.

It is a broad scope of items that are affected. However, robust enforcement of the antitrust laws could provide substantial benefit to consumers because that would help ensure that the markets are competitive, particularly from predatory actions as we have seen specific to Big Tech.

However, it is clear that the administration's actions are not narrowly targeted at Big Tech where it may be considered appropriate. But they are part

of an effort to expand government. And this is kind of a dirty little secret right now. Control over the vast sectors I just mentioned are all being done under the guise of Big Tech. Giving these agencies broader authority is not really going to do anything to enhance competition, so what we see is the heavy hand of government, which is right now crushing small business with the one-size-fits-all mandates, also allowing these agencies more authority over the economy.

This will make government ultimately less accountable. Rather than promoting competition, the Federal Trade Commission is now imposing more costs on businesses. They are driving up prices on consumers, and this ultimately will force inflation even higher. There is just too much cash in the economy right now with very few supplies and services available. That is what inflation is.

The FTC and the DOJ recently announced that they will be revising merger guidelines out of nowhere, out of the blue, and seem to assume that mergers harm competition and fail to realize efficiencies. Companies are also facing the FTC inquiries related to unionization and environmental and social issues, which are well outside of the agency's mission and also is not related to their responsibilities in and around upholding competition.

The FTC has also required prior approval for future deals from businesses with a previous violation; again, all of a sudden, out of the blue, effectively making them guilty without the presumption of innocence.

Even more bizarre than we could ever imagine, many of the actions have been done using so-called "zombie votes" from a commissioner who is no longer there; not even in the system. The clear intent of these actions is to discourage businesses to engage in the legal conduct of mergers.

Even former President Obama's Treasury Secretary, Larry Summers, numerous times has stated that these policies will reduce supply, which will increase prices while discouraging investment. If the FTC and the unaccountable bureaucrats at the other agencies, such as the FDIC, continue to stray from the rule of law, Americans will face higher prices.

HONORING 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the 80th anniversary of the Mighty Eighth Air Force unit. The Mighty Eighth Air Force was organized in Savannah, Georgia, on January 28 in 1942. It was comprised of 48 bomber groups, 21 fighter groups, and three photo reconnaissance groups, making it the largest of its kind at the time.

The Mighty Eighth was utilized heavily over the course of World War II,

participating in primarily heavy bombardment of strategic and military targets in Nazi-occupied Europe and Germany. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum opened its doors in 1996, in Pooler, Georgia, during my tenure as mayor. It tells the heroic story of the Mighty Eighth, along with the story of World War II.

Featuring a B-17 project from the National Air and Space Museum, a fire truck used at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, along with multiple other aircraft and state-of-the-art technology, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is a remarkable tribute to our brave soldiers.

The celebration kicked off on the 28th of January and events will be held throughout the year to celebrate this momentous occasion. I am proud to have been involved in the construction and dedication of this tribute to American heroism and want to thank the staff and supporters for making this celebration possible.

HONORING GUS BELL

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in gratitude for the service of a friend and an instrumental member of the First District of Georgia, Mr. Gus Bell.

Gus is a proud graduate of The Citadel, where he received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. From The Citadel, he continued his education at the University of Kentucky. Gus Bell has worked in every aspect of engineering, starting his career with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Virginia and Albuquerque before joining his private firm.

I am proud to call Gus Bell a friend and have had the pleasure and opportunity to work with him throughout the years. He has had an enormous impact on my career. The work that Gus has done to better the First District is nothing short of remarkable and deserves recognition.

The red brick waterfront, Rousakis Plaza, in Savannah and the I-95 corridor in Pooler are just examples of how Gus' expertise has led to growth and new development for the great State of Georgia. His commitment to his community is an inspiration, and I cherish the time we had to work together.

Gus is an example of a servant to others, and we are very grateful for his years of work and commitment. Thank you, my friend.

RECOGNIZING JEKYLL ISLAND'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Jekyll Island's 75th anniversary as a State park. Under Governor M.E. Thompson, Jekyll Island was purchased in 1947 and Jekyll authorities will be having events throughout 2022 to celebrate 75 years.

This island has been a vacation spot for Georgians across the State for decades, and it will continue to be for years to come. Recently, Jekyll has experienced increasing growth with the

construction of a hotel in 2010, parks, camp sites, public beaches, and more.

The biggest addition to Jekyll Island was conducted in 2015 with a revamped shopping center, Beach Village, hotels, and the Westin Jekyll Island opening. I had the privilege of attending the kick-off celebration, complete with fireworks and synchronized swimmers, and am excited for what the rest of 2022 has in store for Jekyll.

COVID hit the hospitality industry especially hard and Jekyll Island was no exception. Through resiliency, hard work, and a dedicated community, Jekyll Island will be back in full force and better than ever.

This great Georgia vacation spot will be back on the map as a must-see for residents and people across the country.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 11 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Many are the plans in our hearts today, O Lord, numerous agendas and schedules, lists of expectations, and countless intentions. We lay all of our efforts before You that Your purpose would prevail; that Your direction and design, Your will and aim would guide our lives.

It seems that our days are driven by overwhelming demands on our time, goals to accomplish, and deadlines to meet. We commit to You, Holy God, all that we hope to do today, that You, in Your mercy, would allow our plans to prosper.

The way seems clear in our minds; Lord, would that You establish our steps this day. May we receive the gift of Your counsel and the excellence of Your wisdom.

We pray this prayer in the certainty of Your holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to section 11(a) of House Resolution 188, the Journal of the last day's proceedings is approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON)